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## **DEPUTATION RE PARKING PROBLEMS ON HAWICK HIGH STREET**

**Briefing Note by the Depute Chief Executive, PLACE**  
**PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS COMMITTEE**

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**6 OCTOBER 2016**

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### **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 **This briefing note advises the Petitions and Deputations Committee on the review of on-street parking and traffic management and how it relates to Hawick High Street.**
- 1.2 Scottish Borders Council received, on 24 June 2016, a petition entitled **Parking problems on Hawick High Street**. The statement read:  
*The removal of the warden service has seen a marked increase in the abuse of parking regulations on Hawick High Street, to such an extent that it is having a detrimental effect on High Street businesses and a solution is required.*
- 1.3 In February 2014 Police Scotland withdrew their traffic warden service in Scotland. On-street parking transgressions in the SBC area remain a criminal offence and enforcement responsibility lies solely with Police Scotland regardless of the fact that they no longer have a dedicated Traffic Warden Service
- 1.4 Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) is a regime which enables a local authority to administer its own parking penalties, including the issuing of Penalty Charge notices (PCNs). In areas with DPE, stationary traffic offences cease to be criminal offences enforced by the police and instead become civil penalties enforced by the local authority.
- 1.5 DPE can only be introduced on an authority wide basis. There is no mechanism for pilot studies or permanent schemes on a reduced area or town by town basis. It is however entirely up to individual local authorities how it applies its resources once DPE is introduced. For clarity the Council will be responsible for parking control over the wider Council area but can choose to concentrate on certain towns or areas within that area.
- 1.6 An alternative to DPE is to use The Police and Fire (Reform) Act 2012 as a mechanism to require the police to address parking enforcement as part of the local policing plan. This would be in addition to any current enforcement that is being undertaken.

- 1.7 The Council is currently considering its position with regard to the future management of on-street parking and it is hoped a decision will be made on this in the near future.
- 1.8 The Council agreed at its meeting of 29 June 2016 to undertake parking surveys at key town centres across the Scottish Borders to establish the scale of the problem prior to recommending a way forward.
- 1.9 In Hawick the surveys were undertaken on 3 consecutive days starting on Thursday 11 August 2016 with the following findings:

**Occupancy Levels:**

In overall terms the town centre was at times close to, but always below capacity. The High Street itself was typically at between 80% and 90% of capacity on weekdays and somewhat less than that on a Saturday.

**Length of Stay:**

Generally, this was very positive with a significant majority (85%) of vehicles only staying for under an hour at a time. Where there were exceptions to this it tended to be for much longer periods, often the whole 8 hour survey period.

**Turnover Levels:**

This was mixed across the area with poor turn over in O'Connell Street, but reasonable to good turn over in most of the High Street and the north side of Bourtree Place.

**Observations on Restricted Parking:**

There were a number of observations of parking on double yellow lines but in the main most restricted sections were actually quite well observed. A marked exception to this was a 26 metre length on High Street where there was much more regular abuse.

Despite the fact that they have the same meaning in law during the time periods of the survey there was a marked difference in the approach to parking on single yellow lines as opposed to double yellow lines. Parking on single yellow lines was more commonplace at 3 of the 5 lengths in the survey area.

With the occasional exception those observed as parking on either a double yellow lines or a single yellow lines were gone by the time of the next recording circuit (i.e. within the half hour).

There was also observance of vehicles parked, or waiting on, zig-zag markings, keep clears and disabled bays when not entitled to do so. Again this tended to be for short periods.

- 1.10 Unfortunately there was no comparable survey in Hawick prior to the removal of traffic wardens. Comparison between before and after on-street parking studies in Peebles High Street and Eastgate however, suggests that the withdrawal of traffic wardens has not had as big an impact as is generally perceived and parking habits have not actually changed significantly over the period.

## **2 CONCLUSION**

- 2.1 **I recommend that the Committee recommends no further action at this stage and allows Council to take a view on the preferred way forward in relation to on-street parking and traffic management when a report comes before it in November.**

**Approved by**

**Martin Joyce**  
**Service Director Assets & Infrastructure**

**Signature .....**

**Author(s)**

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**Background Papers:** Petitions Procedure

**Previous Minute Reference:** None

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Contact us at Jacqueline Whitelaw, Environment and Infrastructure, Scottish Borders Council, Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose, TD6 0SA, Tel 01835 825431, Fax 01835 825071, email [eitranslationrequest@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:eitranslationrequest@scotborders.gov.uk).